1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

561 a rite of passage and this is also proved by the fact that the money or the
731 bracelets given to the persons concerned do not remain their property. As regards the circumcised, they remit them to the chief, and the chief distributes them to the old women who are no longer able to bear children. The girl who has passed through the khomba gives them to her adopted mother, who will use them in the same way. All the money remitted to the bride will go to the master of the village, for the old women and the children. *Married people must have no share in it*, as these presents are taboo. Why ? Because they are connected with a passage, and people who have sexual relations are considered as increasing the dangers connected with these critical phases of human development, when the heart is troubled by a half-conscious fear of a new and unknown future. Amongst civilised people who have reached the era of individualism, these fears find their expression in songs and poetry. In the communistic society they express themselves by means of rites.

*
* *

541 Here are some answers to the questions of Professor Frazer on
387 marriage.
611 A man always brings his wife to his own home. This is the *tlhoma*, and it is a law. It is taboo for him to go and live with his parents-in- law, at any rate when he marries his first wife. In the course of time, when the children have grown up, when the *bukoñwana*, viz. the relations with parents-in-law, are of old standing, a man can go and live in his wife's village (See Part II). Another case in which this can be done is when a widow refuses to marry the man who legally inherits her, and gives herself to a stranger, a man of Inhambane, for instance. He does not pay the lobolo, and lives with her in her village ; but the children born of that union will belong to the family of the deceased husband.

585 There is no preparation for marriage amongst the Thongas by fasting, bleeding or keeping awake the night before. No corn or rice is thrown at the bridal pair. The bride or bridegroom is never represented at the marriage by a proxy or dummy. Conjugal relations begin immediately after marriage (see page 113), but the wife does not possess her home and her kitchen for the first year ; during that period she must cook for her mother-in-law.

583 There are no occasions on which men exchange their wives.
See practical conclusions on Marriage Rites at the end of Vol. I.

to hinder the child from growing and to put in its place, by means of her enchantments, a snake, a hare, a quail or an antelope!

After the birth, owing to possible contamination by the lochia, sexual intercourse is prohibited till the rite of tying the cotton string (p. 56) has taken place. It is then allowed, but conception must be avoided till weaning, when relations are resumed in the normal way, and this goes on till the time when the woman is no longer able to bring forth children. I know of no special rules in connection with the menopause.

* * *

But, amongst Bantus, sexual relations are not an individual affair, as amongst nations more advanced in evolution. There is a mysterious relation between them and the collective life of the community. Hence the fact that, on certain given occasions, they are recommended, even ordered, or prohibited.

1) Cases of recommendation.

Sexual relations must take place on two principal occasions : when the inmates of a village abandon it and go elsewhere to found a new one, and when the widows perform the painful rite of "lahla khombo" (to cast away misfortune). We shall see, when studying these customs, that sexual relations have here a twofold signification : 1) they "consolidate" the little community in its new abode, viz. they strengthen its structure by confirming the authority of its chief ; 2) they provide the principal means of getting rid of all contamination, especially of the defilement connected with death. (Annotatio 13.)[1]

2) Cases of prohibition.

Married people are not considered as being in a state of defilement, as mourners are, for example. Yet this class of persons, called "ba-kukhila," constitute a danger for those members of the community who are in a weak state of health. They must not come in contact with the circumcised, because in that case their wounds would not heal properly.

1 [See pp. 518-519 in these categories or in V6--Analyst]

783 765 washed in the pool and which she will wear again for two days (1).

b) *The following days of the Great Mourning.* Without delay a new hut, a small provisional hut, is built in front of the mortuary one. Here the great wife will stay during the whole of her widowhood; the space between this and the old hut is more or less taboo and most of the possessions of the deceased are placed there, under the roof near the door on the outside. (See illustration p. 159.)

The other widows do not leave their huts, but they participate in the other purifying acts, the vapour baths and the general sprinkling of the fifth day. As regards the vapour baths, however, the first wife is associated with the grave-diggers, viz. she must be exposed to the strongest medicinal smoke, while the inferior wives are cleansed with weaker drugs. They all put on the *malopa* and eat with spoons during the whole year of widowhood.

587 595 428 768 604 c) *Provisional decision regarding the fate of the widows.* A few days after the Great Mourning, a fresh gathering takes place, not in connection with the defilement of death, which is now provisionally cleansed, but *to settle provisionally the fate of the widows.* The sisters of the deceased have to play a special part in this gathering. They will lead the discussion with the widows about their new husbands. It is indeed a happy custom to let women decide on the subject. Not that they have unrestricted power in the matter. The law has provided a certain rule for the distribution and this is seldom departed from. However, some liberty is allowed in its application, and modifications can better be made if proposed by female intermediaries. Should the husband possess a harem (tshengwe), that is at least five wives, they will most likely be given to the following heirs. The great wife, being "the pole of the

575 783 765 (1) *Widowers* also form a similar society and undergo the same rites; but just as it was only the great wife who was subject to these laws, to the exclusion of the little wives, so it is only when he has lost his first wife that a man is initiated into the widowers' society. After having buried her (he holds her head) he goes to the pool, washes himself, and another widower comes and makes the incision in him in the inguinal region. Then he throws aways his *shifado* (Annotatio 1.) and also carries out the same crossing of the hut in tears. These three acts constitute the actual widower's mourning: the vapour baths and *tahla khombo* are part of his purification as being the principal grave-digger.

1 [See category 116 --Analyst]

787 village," must remain in it and belongs to the younger brother (1) 545 who becomes the master of the kraal. The second goes to the 428 second brother, the third to the third, the fourth to the *ntukulu*, 768 viz. to the son of the sister of the deceased. The fifth will then become the wife of one of the sons of the deceased. This may 604 appear shocking, and is really shocking even to the ideas of the Natives ; but let it be remembered that she is the youngest of all ; she was taken when the father was already old, and the first son is perhaps older than she. As regards the elder wives, the first and second especially, no one would think of keeping them for the son! Incestuous relations are very rare amongst the [835] Ba-Ronga. Even in this case, the feelings of both parties are more or less respected. The men advise the son to begin to play with the young widow, to ask her jocularly for tobacco, and he gradually accustoms himself to consider her no longer as a mother (mamana) but as a wife (nsati).

587 Of course the general rule is apt to be very much altered 545 according to circumstances. Should the deceased be the youngest 428 of the family, his elder brother may inherit the first wife. But 768 this is not the regular procedure.

The distribution having thus been decided on, the sisters of the deceased call the widows and say to them : "You so and so, you shall give food to so and so (phamela manyana)." But then the struggle begins. One of the widows, being old, may altogether refuse to have anything to do with any of her brothers-in-law. She may say : "I am taking my young son as a husband" which means : I do not want to be the wife of anybody. Or she will say : "I choose the big tree of the village where my late husband has built his hut." This answer may mean two things. Either : I do not leave this kraal and I will stay here without a husband ; or, on the contrary : I consent to be the wife of the man who becomes the headman of the village, viz. the eldest of the younger brothers. Another will say : "I love my *ntukulu* so and so." Should, however, the first wife desire to go to a man who does not

(1) Amongst the Ba-Ronga, an elder brother of the deceased cannot inherit a widow. It is taboo. He is a father to her, not a husband. He sometimes takes the lead in the discussion, having no personal interest in the matter. (See Part II).

587 393 428 768 live in the village, the family council will certainly object strongly to her wish, as her departure would mean that the village would cease to exist. But in the case of the younger widows it is quite possible that an exception to the ordinary law would be allowed if they insisted upon choosing another husband (1).

After all, this is but a preliminary consultation, and the men who are rejoicing at the idea of getting new wives will perhaps be badly deceived later on, as we shall see. However the man provisionally chosen as the future husband of a widow, will at once pay visits to her, "march to her" (ku mu fambela), according to the technical expression.

765 783 833 d) *The casting away of misfortune.* But before any new and happy life can begin for the widows, they have still to go through a very hard trial. They must perform the *lahla khombo*, the throwing away of the malediction of death, and this is much more difficult for them than for the grave-diggers or the other members of the village. The main point in this strange act of purification is this ; before a widow can become the wife of her new husband, she must have sexual intercourse with another man whom she deceives. Should she succeed in freeing herself from him so that the act keeps its ritual character, s. n. i. (see Annotatio 2)[2], this man will take on himself the malediction of death, and she will be purified. On the contrary, should the man accomplish the whole act, the widow has failed and will return home with shame and in despair! Here is a description of this sad expedition of the widows. It takes place a few days after the gathering just described. The men of the village send the widows away, telling them : "Go and scatter (hangalasa) the malediction through the country and get rid of it before some other misfortune happens to us."

(1) What would happen should the widow choose a husband outside her husband's family? To the mind of a heathen woman the idea would never occur. But suppose a Christian widow, having only married sisters, refuses to become their wife, her conscience forbidding her to contract a polygamic union. Her case would be very hard indeed, as I do not think her wish would be taken into consideration by heathen relatives. It would have to be brought before the White magistrate, who would probably try to help the widow. I think that, even if the woman consented to submit such family matters to the European court, she would have to give the *lobolo* of her children back to her brothers-in-law, and that might be an impossibility for her. It would be interesting to know how Native Commissioners proceed in such cases.

2[See p. 516 in these categories or in IIC -- Analyst]

124 The description I have given of the *lahla khombo*, translating
178 exactly the narratives of Mbozà, Elias, and an old widower called
164 Magingi, refers to the rite as it was performed in the normal
783 fashion some twenty years ago amongst the Ba-Ronga. Now
765 customs are changing. There is, all around the town of Lourenço Marques, an agglomeration of Natives coming from many tribes. Immorality there has become terrible owing especially to alcoholic excesses, a free and enormous sale of adulterated wine taking place in this region. The widows are sure to find there a hundred men for each of them, when they wish to cast away their defilement. But in this promiscuity the poison of syphilis makes terrible ravages. According to our medical missionary, 90 % of the
783 Natives are contaminated by this disease. When the men up
765 country saw that their wives came back ritually purified but
178 physically contaminated, they began themselves to accomplish the necessary act. This has become the general custom to such an
833 extent that, when a widow goes to Majlangalen, (such is the name of that hell of drunkenness and immorality), it is now said of her : "She will refuse to stay with her legal heirs!" However the law of the *lahla khombo nhoben*, to cast away the malediction in the bush, remains inexorable in the three cases where the defilement is considered as being of the worst kind : if the
[845] husband died of phthisis or of leprosy, or if the woman has had twins.

Old widows who can find no lovers may be purified by means of drugs.

765 e) *The year of widowhood*. Though the widows have found
587 new husbands, they still remain in the old kraal. They must accomplish there "a full hoe," viz. a whole year of ploughing. In their new fields they leave the dry sticks of the mealies of the year before, in such a way that everybody passing by will know at once that this is the field of a widow. But what they harvest this year will belong to the new husband. They have now the right to *fambelana*, viz. to go to each other. The suitor brings clothing to the woman, and the woman pays him visits with jars of beer. They belong more or less to each other. But the marriage of the inherited woman is not absolutely settled. Her

final fate will not be known before the last and most important act : the adjudication of the inheritance.

f) *The day of the adjudication of the inheritance.* This is a most typical ceremony prepared for with great care, because the day is full of surprises and dangers. Every precaution is taken to avoid misunderstanding, and to bring the mourning to a peaceful and satisfactory conclusion. It is winter time ; the mealies have been collected from the fields of the widows, the small cobs called *makumula* have been set carefully apart, as they have to be used especially to prepare the beer for the feast. The council of the family is again assembled and decides that the time has come. The divinatory bones are consulted. Should they be favourable, the ceremony can take place. The bones are again asked a number of questions : Who must take the mealies from the granary and put them in the pot to soften them in water ? (first operation of native beer making). A newly married woman who has had only one child is chosen by preference. Then it is asked how long this softening must continue ; who is to shout her *mikulungwane* to accompany the work ; who will have to get the mealies out ; which woman must give the first blow in the mortar to pound the softened mealies, etc.

All the relatives assemble in the mortuary village. One year has elapsed since the death, and the bitter feelings of mourning have passed. Nobody will miss the feast, certainly not the *batukulu*, viz., the nephews, sons of the sisters of the deceased. Some may be disappointed this day, but one of these nephews may return home richer than when he left! Most of the relatives arrive before the great day, to help in the preparation of the beer. When the woman designated by the bones has given the first blow, all her companions start at once pounding with vigour : "Che-ghe-ghe-ghe," and they sing songs of mourning. This is one of these songs, and a very significant one :

> Hi ńlo, hi rilo ! Hi ta ku yini ku we, Hosi ndjina ?
> We are weeping, we are weeping ! What shall we say to thee, King !

This king is without doubt Heaven, the more or less personal being who kills or gives life, and whom we shall often meet with in these pages.

768 The sun is now setting. All the men go to the central place of
575 the village and sit round the fire. The widows remain on the
533 spot, between the deceased's hut and the new hut of the great wife, where all the belongings of the late husband have been kept during the whole year. The other widows of the family surround them once more ; no other woman is allowed to approach. The present ceremony is another secret rite of the company of widows. They sing the following mourning song to recall all the sufferings of the year of widowhood :

Angoma nkulukumba ! Tatana a nga fa, a ba siya
Na ngoma a nga si ba byela !
Our secret law is a great law ! Our father has gone, he has left them,
And he had not told them about that law !

768 During this song the old women take away all the clothing of
587 the widows, and wash their bodies. Then they lead them into the hut of the great wife and put on them new clothing, the clothes which their suitors and other relatives have brought for them. When they are all seated, the sisters of the deceased proceed to the last distribution. They first ask the great wife : "You, to whom do you belong ?" She answers : "Do you not know him ? It is the man who has taken care of me, who has been visiting me! I choose so and so!" She may also say : "I kill so and so!" *(Ndji dlaya man)*. That means : "As I have killed my first husband, I might do the same for the second," a very promising declaration! As soon as the widow has given her answer, the women in the hut begin shouting loudly, and one of them goes out to the men, and cries : "So and so says she kills so and so !" They proceed to ask another : "You, whom do you choose ?" The woman remains silent. "What do you mean?" — "I do not choose anybody." — "How is that? Be sensible!" — "No! I do not want anybody!" — "Why ?" They begin to press her : "You know well who has taken care of you, who has visited *(kambela)* you the whole year." — "I do not want him!" — "How is that possible ?" — "No, I do not want him. I want the *ntukulu* so and so." A frightful noise is heard in the hut ; they are all shouting together. What has happened ?

587 Probably this widow was not pleased with the man to whom they
768 had destined her. Seeing more of him during the year, her affection had not increased. On the other hand, she had some liking for one of the *hatukulu*, and she arranged secretly with him, and perhaps also with his mother, that she would keep silent till this day and then choose her nephew. It is quite possible that the mother of the *ntukulu* will say in that case: "Has this widow not been bought with the money which I secured for the family by my marriage?" Of course the official suitor objects strongly to this spoliation. He becomes angry. During a whole year he has given clothing to the ungrateful one. Things may grow so bad that the *ntukulu* carries off the fractious widow at once, saying: "Good-bye! I go with my wife!" The old men will then follow him and implore him to come back. If they see that the woman is quite decided, they will allow her to go to the husband of her choice. They had better consent to it at once, because it not infrequently happens that the *ntukulu*, if repulsed that day, will go to the family of the woman and claim the money *(lobola)* paid for her by her late husband, saying: "That *lobola* comes from my mother. If you do not give us our wife, if you allow her to stay with another man, then give us back the money." Or it may happen also that the widow, brought perforce to the house of a younger brother-in-law, will run away to the *ntukulu*, and the rightful husband will be helpless. There is a saying to this effect: "A woman inherited cannot be forced." Of course
587 such cases of conflicting interests cause a great deal of friction
578 between members of the family, and the Natives are much distress-
768 ed about it; they try to avoid it as much as possible. But the
428 desire of getting one more wife is so strong in the heart of a Ronga that such disputes are by no means rare, and the day of the adjudication of the inheritance is universally dreaded. However, they never go as far as fighting, and if an uncle and a nephew have parted from each other on bad terms, they will very likely try to mend matters by the sacrifice of reconciliation *(hahlelana madjieta)*, which is one of the admirable features of the Ronga religion (See Part VI).

The widows are truly the most important part of the property

783 village itself, which must carry out the collective purification of
768 *hlamba ndjaka*.

I must further mention a new custom which is spreading
587 amongst the Ba-Ronga in the neighbourhood of Lourenço
609 Marques. When a widow objects to becoming the wife of the legal
611 inheritor, she goes home and adopts another husband. There are plenty of men of other tribes, coming from Inhambane, Quelimane, Mozambique, who have no wife. They accept the proposal of the widow and go to live in her village. They are generally despised and called by the insulting name of *mugomo*, a Zulu word meaning an empty iron oil-tin. They are as hard and unfeeling as such a tin! If children are born, they belong to the family of the deceased husband, who paid the lobolo.

587 Sometimes also a widow chooses a nephew who is still a child. She gives him food as if she were his wife, but she lives with another man whom she loves. It even happens that she may choose a girl, the daughter of another wife of the deceased. (Annotatio 13.)[1]

C. OLD AGE AND DEATH

888 An old woman, having in some sort gone out from the sexual
782 community, enjoys some privileges which are taboo for her sisters who are still capable of childbearing. She is allowed to put on the clothing of the widows ; contamination of death is not so dangerous for her. She can proceed to the purification of the village, in certain cases of epidemic, and of the weapons of the warriors in war time (Part III). After the sacrifice of the black ram for rain, old women and small girls alone are allowed to eat the flesh of the victim.

462 But old and decrepit women are despised. As long as they
888 can still till their land, they are treated with consideration, but when they have lost all their strength and must be fed by their children, they are looked upon as troublesome burdens. I must say that, as long as she still has an atom of vigour, a Thonga woman goes to her field and tills it. During all her life time

1 [See pp. 518-519 in these categories or in 116—Analyst]

462 888 she has contracted such an intimate union with Mother Earth that she cannot conceive existence away from her gardens, and she crawls to them with her hoe, by a kind of instinct, till she dies.

764 The death of the woman is accompanied by the same rites as the death of a man. I must mention, however, the custom of *mahloko*, which takes place when a woman dies while still in her prime. Mahloko comes from *nhlokó*, head. The explanation of this technical word is this : the parents of the woman say : "Our head (viz. a person belonging to us) has died ; let us go to mourn her."

587 578 Let us first see how this mourning takes place *in the Ronga clans*. If the two families were very friendly, the parents of the deceased will probably bring with them a little girl, saying : "This is our little green meat (mbuti), our little orange (rather sala, fruit of the nsala tree)." They offer her to the husband to take the place of the deceased wife, and a new contract will be made. The widower will then at once pay a first part of the lobolo, £ 5 for instance, and, in the course of time, he will marry his sister-in-law. But generally the visitors are angry, and the mahloko ceremony is very unpleasant. It may be that the deceased wife had not been entirely paid for. In that case her parents will come at the end of the mourning to "claim the herd" (ramela ntlhambi).

764 578 754 But though there may be no difficult lobola question in the way, uneasiness is felt, because the brothers of the deceased cannot help thinking that their sister has been killed by witchcraft. It was not yet time for her to die ; so she must have been bewitched by the husband's family, probably by her co-wives, who were jealous of her. When the Great Mourning took place, they hardly came to the mortuary village. One or two went to see their "head," and mourned her in their own kraal. To day, the day of mahloko, they assemble, and throw bones in order to know who will have to speak, who will receive the mahloko money, whether the money has been bewitched ? The whole company starts for the mortuary village, driving a goat before them. They sit down outside in the bush with dark looks ; there is no longer any hut to receive them... They have been noticed by the

l: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

765 as usual in the house of the deceased wife's mother, and the parley takes place through the go-between (tintjumi), as in the discussions which precede marriage. Let us call the husband's family A and that of the wife B. A sends two hoes to B as a notification : "Your child died with us last year." B answers "All right! Then pay the fine for her head (nhloko). Because you had only bought her legs. Her brain, her head, her name was still ours." A sends five hoes to B, to pay for the brains of the deceased. B takes two of the five and sends them back to A, saying : "One of them is to cleanse you from the misfortune, and we shave your head with the second." A accepts the two hoes and returns home. Should the wife have died childless, there will be a second act to the procedure: A has "opened the door of the claim" (a pfurile nyangwa wa nandju). He will come back shortly to lodge it with B.

587 768 Here he comes. Using his go-between (ntjumi) as a mouth piece, he says to B : "Look at us! We gather our ashes with our own hands and we dig water in small shells of sala,— viz. we have no wife to do this feminine work for us!" It means : "Please give us another wife or repay the money to buy one." If B happens to have a girl of marriageable age, he will say : "Do not kill us ; we put a log of wood across the road" (hi hingakanya ntjandja). This means : "We have put something to prevent you from coming to us as enemies. Here is a new wife for you." A understands quite well and goes home satisfied. He comes back without delay and brings twenty or thirty hoes, which is a beginning of lobola payment. He says : "We thank you for the wife." The girl then follows him at once, if she is of marriageable age ; if not, she stays at home until she is grown up, and during all this time her new husband provides her with clothing. When, having gone to live with him, she gives birth to a child, B comes to A and says : "Nwombekazi a yi ambi nandju," viz. "A cow which has calved is not used to pay a debt," that is to say : she must be paid for herself. This technical expression means therefore : As our daughter has given you posterity, pay the full lobolo for her! A will certainly do it "hi bushaka," on account of the friendly relation existing between B and himself. But if B has no girl to give in compensation, if he has no money, what will happen ? A will

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

follow his oxen where they have gone, namely into the family of the girl who has been bought by B for one of his sons. This woman is for the widower his great *mukoñwana*, the woman he fears the most in all the tribe. We shall see what will then happen when treating of the extraordinary relations existing between these two individuals. This wonderful story of the consequences of the death of a wife, so characteristically told by Viguet, provides us with an excellent opportunity for transition to Part II of this work, which will explain the relations between all the members of the Thonga family.

604 with his friends. The malume comes back and is angry. But when he hears that the trick has been played by his mupsyana, he shrugs his shoulders and says : "Oh it is all right if it is the ntukulu who has done it ! A shi biwi ntukulu! The nephew must never be beaten!" When another day the nephew comes again, the malume says : "You starved us to death the other day!" — "Is there any more food handy that I may do it again ?" answers the boy. The sons of the malume seem to have
605 less patience with their cousin than their father has. When the cousin goes definitely beyond the limits of their endurance, they will chase him out of the village saying : "Go away, you dog!" The niece is sometimes as troublesome as the nephew. If she is married and pays a visit to her malume with her husband, she will leave the latter comfortably settled in the malume's hut and search the whole village to discover pots of beer, which she will bring to him as if she were the mistress of the home. She may even catch a fowl and give it to him.

604 Sometimes the malume himself points to one of his wives and
837 says to the ntukulu : "This is your wife. Let her feast you
587 well!" The woman much enjoys the situation, which she finds quite entertaining. She makes a feast for the ntukulu and calls him *nkata*, husband. It will sometimes go so far that the nephew will say to the uncle : "Please make haste and die that I may have your wife!" — "Do you intend to kill me with a gun ?" says the malume... But all this talking is a mere joke. The nephew can take many liberties with this aunt, especially in the Ronga clans. He will never however have relations with her during the life of her husband. Should he do so, he will have to pay the high fine due for a true adultery. Possibly he will inherit her when the malume dies, but she will not be his full property : she will only be given (nyika) to him, and the children will eventually belong to the malume's male relatives. All over the tribe this right of inheriting a malume's wife is recognized. In the Northern clans she is called *kokwana* ; in Ronga territory she is called kokwana by her nieces only, but her nephews call her *nsati* (wife), and this term seems also to be an old feature of the relationship system. This relation of malume and mupsyana is so important

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

607 quently his potential mothers. He avoids them all, not on account
835 of the lobolo oxen, which he did not actually pay for their daughters,
582 but because it is intolerable to think that he might have relations with a woman and her mother.

607 But no doubt the fact that oxen have been paid by the man,
586 oxen by means of which his great mukoñwana was bought, is
835 the principal cause of the fear which they both feel towards each other. These oxen have created a sort of interdependence between them. Mboza says : "Should my home be disturbed by quarrels, should my wife Nsabula leave me and run away to her parents, or should she die without children, I shall go and claim my oxen... But the oxen have been employed to buy a wife for my brother-in-law, (Maphunga for Mahangale). If Gogwe has no other means at his disposal he must separate the pair Maphunga-Mahangale, cancel their marriage, send Maphunga home and claim the money from her parents. Or I might myself take Maphunga as my wife, and in either of these cases the marriage Maphunga-Mahangale would be annulled."

Thus it may happen that Mboza may marry his great mukoñwana, though such a union is really incestuous, according to the deep moral feeling of the tribe. This is truly terrible!

587 But does this ever really happen ? I have put this question to
607 many Thongas, in the various clans of the tribe, and remarked that there are differences amongst them.

Amongst the Nkunas of Shiluvane it is an absolute impossibility. Another woman is offered to meet the claim of the son-in-law who has lost his wife. This is called : "Ku hingakanya ntjandja", i. e. "to put a log across the road." The woman offered may be a little girl, still at the breast of her mother, or even a little boy. This is your wife, his parents will say to the son-in-law, and he must be content to know that, as this male baby will no doubt have a sister in the course of the two following years, the girl to be born will replace his wife. "Ntjandja a ba tluli" i. e. "One does not jump over the log." The man will not persist in his claim, and will not insist on taking the great mukonwana to replace his wife.

Amongst the Khosas and Bilas, such a marriage can take place

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

517/607 if there is really no means of avoiding it. In the Maputju clan, it is also prohibited ; but "owing to the Whites," owing to civilisation, which alters the old, sound laws of the tribe, it sometimes occurs. Everywhere such an occurence is looked on as a great misfortune.

It is in the neighbourhood of Lourenço Marques, ka Mpfumo, that the reluctance is least pronounced. I have from Mboza the description of what will happen in that part of the tribe when a woman dies without children. Viguet has told us the first half of the story (p. 217). The husband has paid the *mahloko* ; the mourning is over ; but the parents of the deceased wife have no money, no young girl to give as compensation. Here is the second part of this family drama. The father of the deceased wife having no other resource "opens the way of bukoñwana to his son-in-law, the widower." Let us suppose it is Nsabula who has died. Gogwe goes, together with Mboza and his official go-between, to the father of Maphunga. Let us call him Mbekwa. He gives him two hoes and says : "We have brought your mukoñwana (Mboza) because we have had a sad affair (hi humele)." Mbekwa asks Mboza : "How many hoes did you pay for your deceased wife" ? — "Fifty," says Mboza. — "Well, we have received from Gogwe as yet only thirty for Maphunga!" Gogwe acknowledges that it is so. He must at once find the missing twenty hoes and give them back to Mboza, who returns to Mbekwa taking them with him, so as to complete the lobola. All this was only preparatory. Now Gogwe has no further interest in the matter, and returns home. It concerns Mboza alone. Mbekwa calls Maphunga and says : "Look ! this is your great mukoñwana ! Now he is your husband." She may say : "Yes, very well." Then Mboza fetches a goat, and a most curious ceremony takes place, which we shall describe later on, the rite of *killing bukoñwana* or *shikoñwana*, the aim being to kill a certain kind of relationship which must be replaced by another, after which Mboza can marry Maphunga. But most probably Maphunga will say : "No! I fear him too much! It is taboo!" Her feelings cannot accept such a change in their relations. Viguet does not say : "She loves her own husband too much to go willingly to another!" This seems to be a minor consideration. If she definitely refuses, Mbekwa will try

587 607 to find another woman. Maphunga may perhaps have a daughter who will do. Or Mbekwa may have a married son whose daughter can also be offered. If the great mukoñwana is only pregnant, the child about to be born is quite enough *ku hingakanya ntjandja*, to put a log across the road and an end to the claim. But the child will perhaps be a boy... not a girl. Never mind! Mboza will wait patiently for a girl ; Shaputa will be born ; he will wait again until she is of age, then he will marry her and she will *pfusha yindlu ya rarana*, viz. raise up the house of her aunt Nsabula (1). Naturally if matters take this course, Gogwe will have to pay the lobola of the girl who has taken the place of the deceased. Nowadays it is not very difficult : he will work, or send one of his sons to work, for the money.

c) The tinamu.

607 When a man goes bukoñwanen, his heart is full of mixed feelings. He trembles lest he may meet the two terrible bakoñwana whom he wishes to avoid ; but, on the other hand, he is greatly rejoiced at the idea that his *tinamu* will welcome him with hearty laughter and jokes and make much of him. Who are these tinamu ? They belong to three categories, which correspond to three kinds of *bulamu*. First of all *the younger sisters of the wife*.

607 835 *Namu*, plur. *tinamu*, in Ronga, *balamo* in Djonga, comes from the archaic verb *yalama*, which means to *follow*, to come after. My tinamu are those who follow my wife, who have been born after her, her younger sisters in particular. They are my *presumptive wives*, therefore I can play with them with the greatest freedom ; I eat together with them from the same plate. They go so far as to smear my face with ashes (tota hi nkuma) and afterwards wash it with water. I have the right to pat their shoulders gently, to snatch something from their hands, to force them to give me something to eat ; and, if they refuse, I will say to them : "How dare you stint me, you, my wives!" They go

(1) One more fact. If Muhangala has taken another wife besides Maphunga, his daughter born of this second wife cannot be used to meet the claim of the widower.

586 wives at once. The custom of marrying a wife's tinhlampsa is
582 approved of; it is however not very frequently observed in Thonga
607 families at the present time.
595 Other women to whom a man has a special right are his relatives on the mother's side, as we have seen; to take a wife from the family in which the father found the mother is recommended and approved of as long as she is not too near a relative.

2) The right of inheritance.

587 The second class of cases does not concern unmarried women
835 whom I mean to lobola, but widows whom I may inherit after
768 the death of their husband. Those whom I may eventually inherit
595 are generally called by me *namu* or *nsati*, and I have very free
582 relations with them, but as already pointed out this liberty never goes so far as to allow of sexual intercourse (p. 247). "Ndi nga da," viz. "I can eat, inherit by prior right" *my elder brother's widow*: she is my regular legacy. As regards my younger brother's widow, I can only marry her if she is old and no longer able to bear children. But if she is still a childbearing woman, to take her is very much against the feelings of the tribe. The reason of the prohibition is this, says Viguet: suppose that this widow of my younger brother already has children. I take her, and have a child by her. The child takes precedence of the first children of its mother: he is their *hosi*, because I, myself, the father, am the elder brother of the deceased. On the other hand, he is *ndjisana* of his other brothers, because he was born after them by the same mother. This is impossible; it runs counter to the most elementary notions of the family. In exceptional cases, however, when no one else can claim my younger brother's widow, I may take her.

587 Next to my true tinamu comes *the widow of my maternal uncle*.
768 If he had many, one might be alloted to me in the distribution.
595 But of course, in this as in all other cases of inherited women, the
582 children born of our union would belong to the family who paid the lobolo, and not to me. I have, in a sense, only the usufruct of the property. She will till the fields for me and serve me with

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

587 my daily plate of porridge, but she is not really mine. She is given
768 (nyika) to me by favour, and only under specified conditions.
595 I can also inherit *bakokwana*, the widow of my malume's father
582 (not my true grandmother, of course, but her co-wife), the widow of my father's brothers.

Muhambi can inherit Magugu, *the widow of his cousin* Hlangabeza. This cousin is a brother (makwabu) and the two fathers are brothers. But he could not inherit Debeza, wife of Phusa. Why so? Because Phusa, being a cousin by the father's sister, belongs to another *shibongo*, the shibongo of his own father Muki and not to that of his mother. Should Muhambi lay claim to Debeza, the men of Mashabane (the name of Phusa's clan) would say : "We are opposed to it, because your doing so would in fact mean that you *eat two herds*. You have eaten one herd when we bought Ndjibari from your people. Ndjibari has had two children ; we have sold her daughter Nwashidjasa to lobola Debeza for Phusa. The oxen were ours. If Phusa dies, Debeza belongs to us and not to you." So Muhambi can inherit the widow of his cousin, the son of his paternal uncle, but not the widow of his cousin, the son of his paternal aunt.

A man can inherit also *one of his father's wives*, as we have seen (page 203), but only under certain circumstances. The dlaya shilongo is never performed in the case of inherited women.

A rule on which Viguet insisted, but which is disappearing, is this : women, when their husband had no younger brothers, must be inherited by *batukulu* and not by *bana* ; batukulu, i. e. either true grandsons, sons of the son, or uterine nephews, sons of the sister of the deceased. The reasons for this law are : 1) Bana, sons, would take liberties with their father's wives and make balamo of them, if they could inherit them regularly. This would spoil the life of the village. 2) If I, being nwana, a son, inherit my father's wife and have a child by her, this child is nwana, a son, to me. On the other hand, this inherited woman may have had children by my father, and they are my brothers. So, one of this woman's children is my son, the other my brother ! "A beleki tinshaka timbiri." — "She has had children of two generations !" This must not be.

611 597 604 This man died during a war with the Portuguese, having been killed on Mbengelen island. The widow was "fambeliwa" (chosen) by Nsiki, Khobete's brother, who was to inherit her. But Nsiki did not really care for the widow. He did not prepare a *ntehe* for the baby nor provide the mother with ochre. Seeing this, Shibaninge went back to her relatives. When the time for the weaning of the little one arrived, a man named Mbobobo had irregular relations with the woman in order to "lumula" the child (See page 60). Mbobobo went so far as to take her to his home, upon which Nsiki claimed the lobolo paid by the Mazwayas and the Libombos gave it back to them. After that, Spoon lived in his mother's family and was called: "wa ka Libombo," "man of Libombo." But he had no real home (a nga na kwakwe). Being on the spot he was always chosen to help in the sacrifices: drinking the beer which remained in the pot after the libations to the gods in the gandelo, near the gate, stealing the offerings when the victims were killed in the sacred bush, etc. He was the "great ntukulu," because his mother belonged to the elder branch or first house of the family. So he took precedence of the other uterine nephews when they had to take part in the sacrifices.

APPENDIX VIII (See p. 281)

The story of Gidhlana Ngwetsa of Rikatla; a typical case illustrating the lobola, divorce, and leper customs of the Ba-Ronga.

587 586 Gidhlana was the sister of a man named Mubene. Both were the children of a fine old Ronga named Ngwetsa and one of his wives. Gidhlana was bought with lobola by a man named Khandlela (candle), son of Ñwamanghele, a man of the Manyisa clan settled near Rikatla. The marriage took place probably in 1893. The new pair did not live in peace. Gidhlana quarrelled with her husband. "Why? Nobody knows! Are the affairs of the huts and the villages known to outsiders?" She returned home to her father Ngwetsa. The husband waited a while. Then he followed her (landjela) and asked her to come back to the conjugal home. Her parents told her to obey. She went. But quarrelling soon recommenced. She fled a second time; her husband and her parents-in-law did their best to induce her to go back. She refused. An uncle of hers took a stick and thrashed her but nothing could persuade her.

587 her, but nothing could persuade her. She stayed in her parents' village. In a neighbouring village dwelt a young man named Muzila, who was the chief of the Rikatla district (Page 381). He belonged to the Mazwaya clan, to the reigning family. He had two brothers, one of whom, called Gudu, was still a boy. This girl, Gidhlana, began to make friends with the boys of Muzila's village. Gudu sent a woman from the village of Ngwetsa to make proposals to Gidhlana (ku mu wopseta). This woman made proposals on behalf of Gudu (a wopsetela Gudu). The girl agreed. But, in the meantime, Gudu started for Johannesburg and Gidhlana was abducted by the other brother, who took her to the village of Muzila : it was a case of marriage by theft (dhuba) (See p. 119). Muzila was grieved at the conduct of these young men, and sent the girl to one of his counsellors to be watched over by him and, going to Ngwetsa, her father, he said : "We have stolen your pot. Look for it in our village, the village of Mazwaya's people." Ngwetsa was greatly puzzled. The first husband had not yet claimed his money back ; it was still in the hands of Ngwetsa and lo! the girl had already been taken by others! This was not right at all! They might have waited a little! All the men of Ngwetsa armed themselves and started as enemies (hi bulala) for the village of the thief.
587 They killed a pig, entered the hut of the thief, took all his implements
639 and made a heap of them on the square. The inhabitants all fled into the bush. But one of them came back with 10 . and said : "Have pity on us, please! We clasp your legs! (khoma milenge, viz., ask for forgiveness). You know ? To steal is a very old thing on earth!" "Yes, we know. The thief trusted his throat! (This is a proverb : he did not fear to swallow a large stone, thinking that his throat would be wide enough to let it pass!). He knew that he would have to pay this fine! All right! You are saved! Take the implements back into the hut."

587 The Ngwetsas took away with them the flesh of the pig, but they sent one joint to the thief, so that he might eat it with his new wife. In this way they gave their consent to the marriage. "They gave him his wife."

586 But very soon afterwards the first husband, Khandlela, came to Ngwetsa to claim the lobola money, as his wife had gone. Gudu had gone to Johannesburg, so nothing was to be found in that quarter. The discussion began. Ngwetsa said : "All right ; but 10 of the lobola money must remain with us, for the fence of our village (lihlampfu)." This is generally done when a woman has been driven

586 away by her husband. Sometimes he must forego as much as £ 1. or £ 2 of the lobolo, because he has not brought the woman back in peace. He has spoilt the fence of the village by ill-treating a girl coming from it. He must repair it with that money... Khandlela refused, saying : "We have not driven her away! She went back of her own accord ; you have even found a new husband for her!" What could the Ngwetsas do ? They had just used the lobolo of Gidhlana to buy a wife for Mubene, her brother. The money had already been given to the Moyane clan from which a girl had been chosen by Mubene. They consequently went to the Moyanes and asked them to return the money. But the Moyanes said : "Your money has already gone further. We have used it to buy a girl of Madjieta for our son. We will go and fetch it." So two projected marriages were prevented ; they would have been annulled, had they been already concluded! In this way Khandlela found his money!

587 Later on Gudu came back from Johannesburg and took Gidhlana as his wife. Hoping that he had earned some money, the Nwgetsas went to him and said : "You have spoilt our flock (ntlhambi)" viz., the oxen which we hoped to get by the sale of our daughter. "Now pay!" Muzila said to them : "Look at Shaputa ; we trust in her!" Shaputa was a little girl, the sister of Gudu. Muzila proposed to Ngwetsa's people to consider her as theirs : "They would find money through her." They consented to wait till she was of age. Some years elapsed.

766 Muzila moved to the Mabota country with Gudu. Gidhlana was suddenly taken ill with leprosy and the disease made rapid progress. She died. Muzila, the master of the village, informed Ngwetsa. Ngwetsa did not come to the burial, neither did any member of the family attend it. Was it not leprosy ? Is not the contagion terrible for members of the family ?... Other people can bury a leper ; his relatives never. However they allowed their fears to go too far, for decency required that, in such a case, some relatives at least should go and witness the burial, even though they might keep far away from the grave. Their behaviour greatly grieved Muzila and entailed unexpected consequences!

587 766 Shaputa grew to be a young woman and a suitor, of the Honwana clan, came and bought her. The Ngwetsas heard of it and at once put in their claim. Muzila informed Gudu, who was then staying near Lourenço Marques. "He fell on his back from the shock!" (o gaa hi le ntjhaku!) and refused to pay. Muzila said to Ngwetsa : "You have forfeited your claim, as you did not attend the funeral. Moreover

587 the chief of our Mazwaya family, Magomanyama, says that no claim is accepted for a leper, for one drowned in the river, or for anyone who dies from smallpox or from the assagay."

692 177 Of course the Ngwetsas did not accept such an answer, but this is a typical Bantu affair (nandju), showing the many blessings of the lobola custom. The matter will have to be decided by the chief, or rather by the Portuguese Administrator, who must take a good deal of trouble, if he wishes to understand it rightly and to deliver an equitable judgment!

APPENDIX IX (See p. 530).

The story of Mboza and Muhambi and of the women inherited by them, illustrating the consequences of lobola and of its suppression.

177 Compare the genealogy of the Masuluke family (page 225).

595 583 Mboza had four brothers, three elder and a younger; Sam, the elder, had a son, Hlangabeza, who married by lobola a first wife and by abduction a second, Bukutje II. Fos, the second brother, married Bukutje I and had four children: three girls, Tshakaza, Estelle, Nhwaanin, and one boy, Muhambi. Sam and Fos both died, so Bukutje I was inherited by Mboza and her four children went to live in his village. In the meantime Mboza became a Christian, as also did Muhambi and the three girls. Wishing to lead a Christian life, he separated from Bukutje I, who, being still a heathen, committed herself with "an empty oil-tin" (p. 213), viz., a man of Inhambane who became her servant-husband. In 1904 a Christian young man, Moses, wooed the elder of the three girls and brought £ 20 to lobola her. This money was naturally due to Muhambi in order to allow him to lobola a wife for himself, and indeed Muhambi was betrothed to Ntshelebeti, daughter of Phulan Ngwetsa. This man was still a heathen and consequently wished his daughter to be paid for.

Having been told that it is not right for a Christian to accept lobolo money, Mboza and Muhambi, actuated by a most praiseworthy scruple, decided to return the money to Moses, and Muhambi started for Johannesburg in order to earn the lobolo due to Phulan. But this was not the end of this famous "bukosi!" The younger brother, Komatan, a consistent heathen, came to Mboza, very angry with him for his

[See pp. 504-509 -- Analyst]

765 "Annotatio tertia decima (P. 213). Cærimoniis purification-
783 is, ubi res genitales primas obtinent partes, ita explicatis,
833 quaeramus quid significent ritus illi.
587 Mors est res quæ imprimis homines contaminat. Omnia polluit quae tangit, non homines tantum ipsos sed etiam quæ mortui fuerunt.

Apud homines, propinqui mors vitæ fontes imprimis afficit, id est membrorum succos qui vitam creant. Itaque et mulieris succi vaginales et viri succi spermatici tollendi sunt: in coitu autem, sub legibus certis sunt tollendi.

Cum vidua lustratur, aut a peregrino aut a novo marito purificatur.

1) Ut recta viduæ purificatio fiat, abrumpendus est coitus, et vir, antequam semen emittat, repellendus; vir erit tum contaminatus at mulier purgata. Vir si in coitu feminam eludentem animadverterit, eam viduam esse et ipsum occidere velle intelleget, tum comites vocat qui, mulierem apprehendentes, dum vir in sinum ejus semen emiterit, vi continebunt; malier tum polluta manebit; quod querebat, non habebit. Vir contra erit sine damno: contaminatus non erit. [519]

2) Cum purificatio a novo efficitur marito, tum ambo in casam se includunt. Res agitur permagna: tabacum ne hauriant! Medicamenta potant singularia. Tum toties cœunt deinceps quoties vir ferre valet, decies et sæpius si potest. Sed toties vir semen extrinsecus emittit: 'bayisanyana ba fanela ku huma, i.e. amovendi sunt pueri (spermatozoa),' ut dicit unus ex eis qui me de his rebus certiorem fecerunt. Nunc sunt fontes vitæ apud virum purgati, quod fieri necesse erat, cum esset et ipse contaminatione impurus. Mulier quoque pura est, haud dubie medicamentorum beneficio quæ, antequam coirent, potaverunt ambo.

Quæ interpretatio ritum recte explicat cum ab impuris hominibus perpetratur. Sed cum a puris parentibus perpetratur, ut de 'boha puri' agitur (p. 56), tum res alio modo est explananda. Pater et mater cingulum infantis e lino xylino factum genitalibus succis inlinunt, ut infans eorum vitalibus succis corroboretur et in vitam gentis ita recipiatur.

These physiological conceptions, though they may be absolutely false from the scientific point of view, certainly proceed from deep intuitions regarding the mystery of life. I insist on the fact that they are not derived from religious ideas. It is a mistake to attempt to explain the whole life of the Bantus by their religion alone, as many writers are inclined to do. These sexual practices are not more religious than those prophylactic measures which we ourselves employ to preserve ourselves from tuberculosis or small pox. They

765 are dictated by a special notion of contagion which is admittedly
723 false, scientifically speaking."
833 [Note 13 (page 213). After we have thus explained the cere-
587 monies of purification in which genital matters play the primary role, we shall inquire into the significance of these rites.

Death is something that contaminates men above all. It pollutes everything that it touches, not men themselves only, but also the things that belonged to a dead person.

Among men, the death of a relative affects first of all the sources of life, that is to say, the juices of the limbs that create life. Therefore both the vaginal juices of a woman and the man's spermatic fluid must be removed: in coitus, however, they must be removed according to certain rules:

When a widow purifies herself, she is purified by a stranger or by a new husband.

1) In order that the purification of the widow proceeds correctly, the intercourse must be broken off and the man must be pushed back before he ejaculates his semen; then the man will be contaminated and the woman will be purged. If the man notices that the woman is trying to evade him during coitus he realizes that she is a widow and that she wants him to perish. Immediately he calls his companions who, seizing the woman, will hold her by force while the man ejects his semen into her vagina; in that case the woman will remain polluted and what she wanted she will not have. The man, on the other hand, will be without blame: he will not be contaminated. [519]

2) When the purification is effected by the new husband, then both seclude themselves in the house. One matter is urged particularly strongly: that they do not smoke any tobacco! They drink curious medicines. Then they have intercourse as many times in a row as the man can last, ten times and more if he is able. But as many times as they have intercourse the man ejaculates his semen externally: bayisanyana ba fanela ku huma, that is, "the children (spermatozoa) must be removed," as one of those who informed me about these things said. Now the sources of life of the man are purged, something which had to be done while he was impure with contamination. The woman is also pure, doubtless on account of the medicines which they drank together before they had sexual intercourse.

This interpretation explains the rite correctly, provided it is carried out by impure men. But when it is executed by pure parents, as when it is concerned with the boha puri (page 56), then the matter must be explained in a different

765 fashion. The father and mother smear the infant's girdle
783 made of cotton flax with their genital juices so that the infant
833 becomes invigorated by their vital juices and thus may be
587 received into the life of the tribe.

These physiological conceptions, though they may be absolutely false from the scientific point of view, certainly proceed from deep intuitions regarding the mystery of life. I insist on the fact that they are not derived from religious ideas. It is a mistake to attempt to explain the whole life of the Bantus by their religion alone, as many writers are inclined to do. These sexual practices are not more religious than those prophylactic measures which we ourselves employ to preserve ourselves from tuberculosis or small pox. They are dictated by a special notion of contagion which is admittedly false, scientifically speaking.]

595 "Annotatio quarta decima (P. 285). Doctori G. Liengmei,
833 nostro medico, cum sæpe curaret viros qui medicinam
842 petebant qua infantes procrearent, fassi sunt se singulis noctibus cum tribus vel quatuor uxoribus coire. (A monogamis quibusdam audivimus uxorem adeo fatigari ut noctu exiret laboratum ut a marito evaderet.) Cum medicus eos hortaretur ut quinque dies concubitu omnino abstinerent, nunquam id concedere potuerunt. Volebant enim facultatem generandi recuperare libidine non omissa. Dicuntur etiam cum vires cupiditatibus nondum pares esse videantur, remedia quædam adhibere sive ut venerem excitent sive ut uxores prægnantes fiant. Duplex fit medicatio. Primum secti testiculi hirci—(quod animal fatigari negatur, mbuti a yi karali)—cum plurimis herbis mixti coquuntur et a viro eduntur. Deinde alias herbas collectas in cerevisiam injicit. Tantum aiunt esse effectum ut viro qui non amplius duas uxores habeat, non sit ea re [520] utendum, ne, illis non sufficientibus, cum aliorum uxoribus stuprum committat, quod ei sit offensioni.

Viri casti, ut in loco Mpfumo videre licet, in sua casa dormiunt et interdum uxorem quam cupiunt ad se vocant. Plerique tamen, lege sibi imposita, ne discordia inter uxores erumpat, mensem unum in casa singularum uxorum vicissim agunt.

Qui plures habent uxores aliis etiam medicaments utuntur ad libidinem excitandam. Quorum unum putant ad effectum maxime valere: Medicus, cum se ipse curavit, in locum montium secedit, quo cynocephali feminæ urinam menstruali sanguine mixtam emittere solent. Quod manet in saxis et fœdissimam diffundit odorem, medicus excipiens coquit, et ex eo magnas conficit pillas quas emptoribus vendit. Hi eas